



Education
Funding
Agency

Care to Learn Guide for 2012/13

May 2012

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Introduction

1. This guide provides information to all those involved in the delivery of the Care to Learn scheme in the academic year 2012/13. It provides general information about the criteria for eligibility for the scheme which has been set by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) – the successor body to the Young People’s Learning Agency (YPLA) from 1 April 2012.

2. This guide does not attempt to offer definitive advice for every situation; stakeholders who require further or more detailed help and advice should contact the Learner Support Service (LSS) who administer the scheme on behalf of the EFA:

- Learning providers, childcare providers, providers of information advice and guidance etc. can call the **provider helpline** on **0845 600 7979**.
- Young people and parents can call the **learner helpline** on **0800 121 8989** (calls are free from a landline, charges from mobiles will vary depending on individual tariffs).

3. The Department for Education (DfE) has confirmed that there will be no changes to the Care to Learn childcare support scheme in 2012/13. Funding arrangements from September 2013/14 are still under review by the DfE and will be communicated at a later date. DfE intend to publish the results of the consultation *Changes to the Care to Learn Childcare Support Scheme* at the same time.

Care to Learn in the 2012/13 academic year

4. Care to Learn is intended to help enable young parents under the age of 20 to continue in, and return to learning after the birth of a child by assisting with the costs of childcare and associated travel (up to £160 per child per week or up to £175 per child per week in London).

5. Professionals from the range of organisations who work with young people are encouraged to communicate the availability of financial support via Care to Learn to young parents. This should include both those young people who aren't yet engaged in considering a return to learning as well as those who they think are considering it. Early awareness of potential financial help can help young parents to make more informed decisions about their options.

Please note: Care to Learn payments can only be backdated to the start of the young parent’s course or learning programme if their application is received **within 28 days of the course start date**. For applications received outside of this timeframe, payments will begin from the Monday of the week the application was received.

The young person must complete a new application for each year that they want to claim Care to Learning funding.

Eligibility for Care to Learn

Eligibility for Care to Learn: a summary

6. In order for a young person to receive support from Care to Learn, they, their learning provider and their childcare provider must all meet the eligibility criteria for the scheme.

7. In summary these are:

- The young person must be aged under 20 on the date that they start their course or learning programme;
- The young person must be the main carer for their child(ren);
- The young person must be living and studying in England;
- The young person must meet the residency criteria;
- The course or learning programme must have some public funding;
- The childcare must be registered with Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission.

Other sources of childcare support and Care to Learn

8. All local authorities offer some free provision to their most disadvantaged two year olds. Parents of all three and four year olds are entitled to up to 15 hours per week of free early education for their child(ren). Young parents may apply for Care to Learn support to cover any extra hours (over and above their free entitlement) to complete their course **but it is expected that young parents should access this entitlement before applying for funding from Care to Learn**. Local Authorities will be able to provide further information about free early education in their area.

9. Childcare tax credits are also available for parents (lone or couples) who meet the eligibility criteria to provide help with childcare costs. Any childcare hours being requested for Care to Learn payments must not already be being funded from child tax credits.

Detailed information on the eligibility criteria

Age

10. In order to receive funding from Care to Learn, the young person must be aged under 20 years old on the date they start their course or learning programme . Young people who become 20 during their course will continue to be funded to the end of that specific course or learning programme, i.e.: to the end of the same course at the same level.

Main carer for the children

11. The young person must be the main carer for the child(ren) for whom they are claiming Care to Learn. If a young person loses custody of their child(ren), even temporarily, **the Learner Support Service must be told immediately**.

12. Care to Learn may be claimed by the mother or the father of the child as long as:

- The other parent is unable to provide childcare, e.g.: they are also in learning or are absent; and
- The other parent is not claiming Child Tax Credits.

Living and studying in England

13. Only young people who are **both living in and studying in England** are eligible for Care to Learn.

14. A London weighting applies to Care to Learn. The London-weighted maximum is £175 per child per week (compared with a maximum of £160 outside London). Eligibility for London weighting is determined by the young person's home address.

15. London weighting applies to the following London Boroughs: Barking & Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Camden, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney & City of London, Hammersmith & Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Kingston-upon-Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond-upon-Thames, Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth and Westminster.

Residency

16. To be eligible for Care to Learn, a young person must be:

- A British citizen; or
- A national of a country within the European Economic Area (EEA) or the child of a Swiss national or Turkish migrant worker.

17. Where a young person indicates that they are a migrant from a country that is outside the EEA, they will be eligible for Care to Learn **ONLY** if one of the following immigration conditions applies:

- Asylum seekers aged under 18
- Asylum seekers aged 18 or over **ONLY** if they are a care leaver aged 18 or 19; if they are they must send an original letter from their local authority that shows their address and confirms they are a care leaver with their application
- Refugee status
- Humanitarian Protection
- Discretionary Leave
- Indefinite leave to remain
- Indefinite leave to enter
- Limited leave to remain
- Limited leave to enter
- Leave outside the rules.

18. Young people are not required to submit evidence of their residency status with their application. Where they confirm they are a migrant from outside the EEA, the EFA may carry out checks with the UK Border Agency (UKBA) to confirm their immigration status. Supporting evidence may be requested from the young person if any issues are identified. Stakeholders should be aware that the evidence requested may include:

- ID card for foreign nationals (issued to those granted leave to remain in the UK a) as a student; b) on the basis of marriage/civil partnership/unmarried couple and c) as dependents of those in category b).
- Appropriate vignette or sticker in their passport (issued to foreign nationals granted leave to remain in any other category)
- Application registration card (ARC) and standard acknowledgement letter (SAL) issued to people who claim asylum or make a claim under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Learning provider and the course/learning programme

19. As long as young people meet the Care to Learn eligibility criteria, there are no requirements for course length, duration or level. The table below sets out the types of provision which are and are not eligible for Care to Learn support:

Courses eligible for Care to Learn	Courses not eligible for Care to Learn
Non-accredited day sessions and short courses within the community such as First Aid, Healthy Eating, Parenting etc.	Privately funded learning, e.g. at an independent school or other institution where students are required to pay tuition fees.
School and college courses including Foundation Learning, 14–19 Diplomas, GCSEs, AS-levels and A2-levels.	Voluntary work that is not a required part of an agreed course or learning programme.
Apprenticeship courses where the apprentice has 'non-employed' status.	Apprenticeships where the apprentice receives a wage.
Further education (FE) courses in a higher education (HE) institution – this includes Access courses and Diplomas.	HE courses in an HE institution or FE institution – courses leading to a first degree, HND, HNC, Diploma in HE, Foundation Degree or Initial Teacher Training
Foundation HE courses where they are followed at an FE institution, e.g. BTEC Diploma.	Distance learning and e-learning courses.

Study time and work placements

20. Young people can claim Care to Learn for independent study time which is needed as part of their course, for example, to complete coursework, undertake revision or homework. The amount of independent study time which is required must be agreed between the young person and their learning provider.

21. Care to Learn will support time needed to undertake work placements, provided that they are an integral part of the course and that they have been clearly identified as such.

22. The costs associated with independent study time and work placements will form part of the Care to Learn weekly maximum amount (£160 per child per week and £175 per child per week in London).

Childcare provision

23. Childcare provision must be registered with Ofsted for it to be eligible for Care to Learn funding. It must be registered in one of the following ways:

- On the Ofsted Early Years Register
- On the compulsory and/or voluntary part of the Ofsted General Childcare Register
- Offered by Ofsted registered schools, i.e.: breakfast and after school clubs.

24. Support for specialist provision on the Care Quality Commission's register may also be granted on a case-by-case basis if general childcare provision is not suitable for the child.

25. The childcare provider must provide evidence of being registered with Ofsted, or, in the case of a school providing childcare, their unique reference number (URN).

26. Where a childcare provider is related to the child, the childcare provider must, **in addition to being registered with Ofsted:**

- live apart from the child; **and**
- be providing registered childcare services for other children to whom they are not related.

The Care to Learn application process in 2012/13

Need help in completing the application form?

Support workers, childcare providers and learning providers - please contact the provider helpline on **0845 600 7979**.

Young people – please contact the learner helpline on **0800 121 8989**.

27. **Young people must choose a learning provider and childcare provider before applying for Care to Learn.** The learner, learning provider and childcare provider details are all collected on one application form. All three parts of the form must be completed before the form is returned to the Learner Support Service for assessment.

28. The young person should complete all of the Learner Details (Part A) on the Care to Learn application form.

29. They should then pass their application form and the Guidance Notes which accompany the form to their learning provider. The learning provider should complete all

of the Learning Provider Details (Part B) of the application form and pass the form back to the young person.

30. The young person should then pass the application form and the Guidance Notes which accompany the form to their childcare provider. The childcare provider should complete all of the Childcare Provider Details (Part C) of the application form and pass the form back to the young person.

31. The young person should send the completed application form to the Learner Support Service in the pre-paid envelope provided. Should the pre-paid envelope be lost, the address for applications is below:

Freepost RSLX-CAZR-RHLY
Learner Support Service
Birmingham B24 9FD

32. We recommend that the young person supplies details of their support worker (if they have one) on the application form. If necessary, the support worker can then be contacted by the Learner Support Service if required to help deal with any queries.

33. Support workers, childcare providers and learning providers are encouraged to contact the provider helpline on **0845 600 7979** at any point during the completion of the application form if they are unsure about what information or evidence is required. Similarly, stakeholders are asked to encourage young people to contact the learner helpline on **0800 121 8989** if they need help in completing the application form. Fully and correctly completed forms are quicker to process, enabling the Learner Support Service to communicate prompt decisions about eligibility to young people.

34. Young people will normally receive a reply within three weeks of submitting their Care to Learn application form. If they do not hear from the Learner Support Service within three weeks they should contact the helpline on **0800 121 8989**

Application packs can be obtained by young people by calling the Learner Support helpline on **0800 121 8989**. Packs can also be ordered from the direct.gov website at www.direct.gov.uk/caretolearn.

Learning providers and other stakeholders can order application packs to distribute to young people by calling **0845 602 2260** quoting reference **EFA-C2L-2012/13**

Assessment of the application form

35. The Learner Support Service will carry out an assessment of the young person's application to determine their eligibility for Care to Learn. It will carry out checks to ensure the childcare provider, learning provider and course are eligible for the scheme, and that the childcare hours claimed are reasonable in comparison with the learning hours entered.

36. Care to Learn payments cannot be made until all information from the young person, the learning provider and the childcare provider has been received and approved. Where an incomplete application form is submitted, the Learner Support Service will write to the relevant party to request the missing information. A copy of any correspondence will also be sent to the young person's support worker, if one is listed on the application form.

37. The following information must be supplied before any Care to Learn payments can be made:

From the childcare provider:

- business name, address and contact details;
- childcare dates and fees;
- a copy of their Ofsted registration certificate - if not previously submitted in 2012/13;
- bank or building society account evidence - if not previously submitted in 2012/13.

From the learning provider:

- course name, level and length. This must be the full course length, for example:
- if the young person is studying a two year NVQ course starting on 5th September 2012 and ending on 19th July 2014 these dates should be entered on the application form.
- if a young person started a two year NVQ course (at the same level) on 6th September 2011 which ends on 20th July 2013 these dates should be entered.
- if a young person studied a course at Level 1 last year and is progressing to Level 2 this year, even if this is in the same subject, this is considered to be a **new** course and the dates for the new course **only** should be entered
- number of hours of learning each week; and
- details of the travel costs the young person wishes to claim;
- bank or building society account evidence - if not previously submitted in 2012/13
- confirmation that they have verified the existence of the child(ren) to be cared for, and thereby the young person's eligibility to receive support from Care to Learn.

Confirmation of eligibility

38. Once the young person's application has been processed and approved, the Learner Support Service will send a Notice of Entitlement (NoE) and a payment plan to the young person and the childcare provider. This confirms the amount that will be paid each week for childcare. Where the young person intends to use more than one childcare provider, a payment plan will be sent to each childcare provider. The combined amounts on each plan will not exceed the Care to Learn weekly maximum amount.

39. A Notice of Entitlement (NoE) covers the whole or remainder of the academic year, enabling the young person to complete and embark on a new course within the same academic year without being required to submit a new application.

40. If applicable, a separate letter is sent to the young person and the learning provider to confirm the amount to be paid for additional travel costs.

41. If the young person is not eligible for Care to Learn, the Learner Support Service will send a rejection letter to the young person. A copy will also be sent to their support worker if one is listed on the application form.

Late applications and backdated claims

42. If the Learner Support Service receives the application within 28 days of the start of the course or learning programme, payments will be backdated to the start of the course or learning programme. **If the application is received after the 28 day period, payments will begin only from the Monday of the week the application was received by the Learner Support Service.**

The administration of Care to Learn in 2012/13

Payments

43. If the young person is assessed as eligible for Care to Learn, payments for childcare will be made directly to the childcare provider by the Learner Support Service on behalf of the young person. Payments for travel costs are made directly to the learning provider by the Learner Support Service on behalf of the young person.

44. All payments will be made securely by the Banks Automated Clearing System (BACS).

Childcare payments

45. Care to Learn will pay towards the cost of childcare up to a maximum of £160 per child per week (up to a maximum of £175 per child per week if the young person's home address attracts London weighting). The funds will be paid directly to the childcare provider each month in advance. **Childcare providers should note that no Care to Learn payments can be made until all the information required from the young person, the learning provider and the childcare provider has been received by the Learner Support Service.**

46. Care to Learn will support childcare hours in reasonable excess of learning hours to allow time for travel between the learning provider and the childcare provider and any independent study time undertaken, within the maximum weekly amount.

47. Retainers can be paid to childcare providers for the time between the end of one learning period and the beginning of another (for example during half term break). A summer retainer, to keep the childcare place open over the summer holiday period, must be applied for separately before the end of the summer holiday period. **Summer retainer forms for 2012 which are received by the Learner Support Service after 1 September 2012 will not be paid.** Paragraphs 61 to 63 provide more detail about eligibility for summer retainers.

48. Deposits of up to £250 per child can be paid to the childcare provider if required. The amount of deposit will be deducted from the first month's childcare payment. In the unlikely event that the first month's childcare payment is insufficient to support the deduction of the full deposit, the balance will be deducted from the second month's childcare payment. The childcare provider cannot have the deposit offset against the final weeks of the payment plan.

49. Registration fees of up to £80 per child, charged by the childcare provider, will be funded through the scheme. Such fees are not deducted from future childcare payments.

Childminder network/broker payments

50. A one-off £100 childminder network/broker payment will be made for each application which is supported by a network/broker that results in a young person starting their chosen course or learning programme. This is dependent on that network/broker providing at least three of the five services listed below:

- Brokerage, in terms of providing a list of available childminders. This would also involve using knowledge of the childminder and their arrangements to explain alternative provision to the young person.
- Matching, to help the young person identify a suitable childminder who meets their needs and is convenient for travel, etc. This may involve visits and discussions.
- Agreeing terms and conditions for the childminding that meet the young person's needs. These would go beyond price alone and include issues such as timing, drop off and collection, diet, routine and behavioural issues. It may also extend to agreeing flexibilities for study, vacations, deposits, retainers, etc. This will ideally be set out in a formal written agreement.
- Using briefings, arranging training and working with childcare providers to meet the needs of young people.
- Retaining an ongoing interest in the young person for the duration of the course and assisting where possible in any change of arrangements.

51. In addition, the network/broker must be recognised by their local authority, Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, or Family Information Service, or the National Childminding Association.

52. The childcare provider will be asked on the application form to make a formal declaration about whether they have been supported by a childminding network/broker service.

Travel payments

53. Young people may receive help with additional travel costs, however, the total of the childcare costs and travel costs must not exceed the weekly maximum amount allowed for of £160 per child per week (or up to £175 per child per week in London). The young person should only claim for travel costs that are necessary to take their child(ren) between childcare and home where those costs are in addition to their normal travel costs from home to college. Travel costs will not be paid where the childcare takes place on the same site as the learning.

54. Learning providers are asked to confirm that any travel costs requested by the young person are reasonable, based on their local knowledge. If the amount of travel being claimed seems excessive, the Learner Support Service will request additional information from the learning provider.

55. Travel payments are made to the learning provider. The learning provider should reimburse the travel payment to the young person, or use it to arrange transport for the young person, as appropriate.

Learning provider administration payments

56. A one-off payment of £80 will be made to learning providers for each new learner on Care to Learn. Only one payment per learner per academic year will be issued. Payment will be made following confirmation from the learning provider that the learner is in attendance.

Care to Learn overpayments

57. Recovery of any Care to Learn overpayments made as a result of error or fraud will take place as follows:

- Any Care to Learn payments that have been made as a result of fraudulent activity will be recovered. This includes all childcare payments, including deposits, registration fees, retainers (including summer retainers), travel payments, learning provider administration payments and broker fees.
- Where overpayments have been made as a result of error by the young person, learning provider or childcare provider, recovery action may be taken. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

Attendance monitoring

58. Payments for childcare will only be made while the young person is still attending their course and where the child is still in childcare. **Both the learning provider and childcare provider will be required to complete and return monthly attendance monitoring forms sent to them by the Learner Support Service.** Learning providers will complete the Learner Attendance Monitoring form (LAM) and childcare providers the Childcare Attendance Monitoring form (CAM).

59. Young people and their child(ren) should attend their provision for all the hours stated in their application form, but there may be occasions where this is not possible, for example because of illness or family emergency. For that reason, there is no required level of attendance set for Care to Learn. Learning providers should use their discretion to assess the number of and reasons for absences when deciding whether or not reasonable attendance has been met and if the young person is still considered to be attending their programme of learning.

Failure by learning providers or childcare providers to complete and submit attendance monitoring returns will result in childcare and travel payments being withheld.

60. Learning providers and childcare providers should notify the Learner Support Service immediately if the young person has stopped attending their course or has removed their child from childcare.

Changes of Circumstance

61. The Learner Support Service must be notified immediately where the following circumstances change:

- childcare arrangements – for example, hours of childcare provided, fee rates, new or additional childcare provider(s), additional child
- learning arrangements – for example, hours of learning, course, new or additional learning provider(s);
- travel costs between childcare and home – increase, decrease or the young person wishes to claim these for the first time;
- childcare provider/learning provider bank details;
- young person's personal details.

62. Change of Circumstance forms are available to young people, learning providers and childcare providers on request from the Learner Support Service.

Summer Retainer

63. Where learning lasts for more than one academic year, or where the young person is progressing onto a further course or University, a summer retainer can be paid to enable the childcare place to be kept open over the summer holiday period.

64. To be eligible for a summer retainer in 2012 the young person must be on a course or learning programme that has lasted for six weeks or more in the 2011/12 academic year. Their course must finish no earlier than 25 May 2012. The young person must be continuing with the same childcare provider they used in the 2011/12 academic year and must have been using the childcare provider for a minimum of six weeks.

65. The Summer Retainer form is included in the application pack that is sent to all returning students. The form must be completed and returned to the Learner Support Service (original forms only, photocopies are not acceptable) before the end of the summer holiday period. **Summer retainer forms for 2012 which are received by the Learner Support Service after 1 September 2012 will not be paid.**

Complaints and appeals

66. All complaints and appeals must be made in writing to the Learner Support Service whose address is set out in paragraph 31.

67. If the complaint/appeal concerns operational processes or a complaint about customer service, it will be dealt with by the Learner Support Service in the first instance. If the complaint/appeal is about Care to Learn policy, the Learner Support Service will refer it to the EFA's Young People's Directorate for a response.

68. In the event that the complainant is dissatisfied with the way in which their appeal has been dealt with, they may write directly to the EFA's Young People's Directorate:

Learner Support, EFA
2 St Paul's Place
125 Norfolk Street
Sheffield
S1 2FJ

69. In the event that they are still dissatisfied with the way in which their appeal has been dealt with, the complainant may refer to the EFA's Complaints Procedure. For more information please see the website at www.education.gov.uk

Audit requirements

70. Learning providers and childcare providers are expected to retain accurate, robust and up-to-date records on attendance and funds received in order to ensure the effective reconciliation of payments.

Sources of further information

Providers

- Learner Support Service provider helpline: **0845 600 7979**
- e-mail: C2L@efalearnersupport.co.uk
- website:
<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/studentsupport/funding>

Learners

- Learner Support Service learner helpline: **0800 121 8989**
- Website: www.direct.gov.uk/caretolearn

Ofsted

- Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk



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